Instructor: Dr. Daniela Vallega-Neu  
Email: dneu@uoregon.edu  
Office hours: TR 2:00-3:00 and Wednesdays by appointment in PLC 328.

Class meets TR 6:00-7:50 pm in PLC 314.

TOPIC: LANGUAGE AND PERFORMATIVITY

Course Description:

A distinctive feature in the creative development of Continental Philosophy in the United States in the past decades concerns the performative aspect of thinking and language. Thinking and language are understood not as opposed to or distinct from a world, things in the world and ideas one would “objectively” describe or argue about, but as a way in which the world, things, and ideas eventuate. In other words, whatever acquires meaning for us, whatever we relate to in meaningful ways, is linguistically mediated. If this is so, how we listen and speak (the performativity of language) makes all the difference with respect to what is understood in this listening and speaking. However, there are quite different ways in which for different continental philosophers the performativity of language becomes a central topic, hinging on issues of loss and silence, finitude, difference, and alterity. Notably there is a difference between hermeneutic-phenomenological approaches and deconstructive approaches, which has lead, for instance, to the famous Gadamer-Derrida controversy. In this course, after a brief consideration of the legacy of Nietzsche and Heidegger, we will focus on Gadamer’s and Derrida’s understanding of language and performativity, ending with their controversy. Class time will consist in close reading and discussion of primary texts.

Required Texts:

- Nietzsche. [Selected text passages from *The Gay Science, Ecce Homo, and Twilight of the Idols.*]  
* These texts will be made available on Blackboard.

**Requirements:**

1. **Comprehensive mid-term paper** 30%

   This paper is merely comprehensive, i.e. it tests whether you were able to follow the course material. The paper needs to be about 5 pages long (no less than 4 without counting quotations, no more than 6, following the formal requirements below). You will be given a number of questions you need to address in the paper and there will be some choice with regards to which questions you wish to pursue.

2. **Final paper** 50%

   The final paper needs to be 6-9 pages long (no less than six full page). It should be based on the work we did in class and demonstrate your capacity to work closely with the primary texts. You can choose your own topic or else ask me for possible topics, but you need to address at least two of the philosophers we discussed in class. In any case, you need to submit a final paper proposal before the last week of class. The final paper proposal should consist in an introductory paragraph that exposes the problem, question, or concept you wish to address, and include a rough outline as well as an indication of the main text passages you wish to discuss. You may write an argumentative paper or an explanatory paper that focuses on a comparative account of concepts or questions.

3. **Participation, short writing assignments** 20%

   You will receive participation points for valuable contributions to class discussion, for completion of short writing assignments and for fulfilling requirements in a timely fashion, such as submitting a final paper proposal. Participation points will be converted into grades at the end of the term.

**Formal Requirements for all papers:**

All papers need to be typed, double-spaced, standard margins, font Times New Roman 12.

**Further policies:**

1. If you need a **special learning assistance**, (for example, use of electronic devices, extended time in exams) please contact the Accessible Education Center (http://aec.uoregon.edu/ Email: uoaec@uoregon.edu Phone: 541-346-1155) and provide your instructors with a written notification regarding the kind of assistance you require.

2. **Handing in homework late** will lower your grade. Homework that is more than a week late will not be accepted, unless this was for demonstrable reasons beyond your control.

3. In order to avoid disruptions in class you are asked to **avoid exiting and entering the classroom while lectures and discussions are going on** and do not pack your things until the class is officially over.

4. **If you miss a class** it is your responsibility to keep up with the course material.
5. Please retain the original copy of all work returned to you during the term until the final course grade has been posted. In the event of any question concerning whether grades have been accurately recorded, it is your responsibility to provide these original copies as documentation.

6. You are expected to follow the rules of academic honesty. Failure to do so will result in failure of the whole course (“F”).

   **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, or data as one’s own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one’s name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

   In order to find out how to avoid plagiarism, see http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

   **Fabrication:** Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

   **Cheating:** Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

**Grading Rubric**

- **A** = excellent. No mistakes, well written, and distinctive in some way or other.
- **B** = good. No significant mistakes, well written, but not distinctive in any way.
- **C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
- **D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.
- **F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week One**
April 3: Introduction to the course.

**Week Two**
April 10: Nietzsche, selected text passages (available on Blackboard).
April 12: Nietzsche, selected text passages (available on Blackboard).

**Week Three**
Week Four
April 26: Continuation of last class. [Assignment of comprehensive midterm paper.]

Week Five
May 3: Continuation of last class.

Week Six
May 10: Continuation.

Week Seven
May 17: Continuation.

Week Eight
May 24: Continuation.

Week Nine
May 31: Continuation of last class.

Homework: Write a final paper proposal. Send it by email before or on June 4th.

Week Ten
June 7: Final discussion.

Final essays due Tuesday, June 12 at 4:00 pm in the Philosophy Department.
(Please include a cover page with course information and title of the paper.)